

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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R 301505Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9850

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CAIRO 8598

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, EG, LY

SUBJ: ALLEGED STATEMENT BY GOE MIN INFO ON EGYPTIAN/LIBYAN
RELATIONS

REF: TRIPOLI 1161

SUMMARY: WE BELIEVE IT UNLIKELY THAT GOE MININFO MADE OPTIMISTIC
REMARKS ABOUT GOE-LARG RELATIONS REPORTED IN REFTEL. CAIRO PRESS
CONTINUES TO TAKE JAUNDICED VIEW OF QADHAAFI. END SUMMARY

1. REFTEL REPORTS STATMENT ATTRIBUTED BY LIBYAN PRESS TO GOE
MININFO ABU AL-MAGD IN WHICH HE REPORTEDLY PREDICTED A FUTURE GOE
ANNOUNCEMENT ON REMOVAL OF EGYPTIAN/LIBYAN TENSION, EXPECTED TO HAVE
A MEETING WITH HIS LIBYAN COLLEAGUE, AND REGRETTED EGYPTIAN PRESS
DISTORTION OF QADHAAFI'S REMARKS TO AL-'USBU- AL-ARABI.

2. IT IS, OF COURSE, POSSIBLE ABU AL-MAGD DID MAKE SOME
SUCH STATEMENT IN THE RECENT PAST, PERHAPS IN RABAT. HOWEVER, NOT
A HINT OF THIS KIND OF STATEMENT HAS FOUND ITS WAY INTO THE
EGYPTIAN PRESS AND WE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF HE HAD IN FACT SAID
ANYTHING EVEN MIDLY CONCILIATORY ABOUT COE/LARG RELATIONS.

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3. SINCE THE "WHAT DOES QADHAAFI WANT?" EPISODE (CAIRO 8416) QADHAAFI'S ABSENCE FROM SUMMIT HAS BEEN NOTED ACIDLY BY THE PRESS SEVERAL TIMES AND PRESIDENT SADAT'S LAUDATORY REMARKS ABOUT KING HASSAN (WHICH WE ASSUME WOULD NOT BE WELCOMED IN TRIPOLI) HAVE BEEN WIDELY REPORTED.

4. THREE RECENT PRESS ITEMS GIVE FLAVOR OF EGYPTIAN MEDIA VIEW OF QADHAAFI. POPULAR CAIRO WEEKLY " AKHIR SA'AH" OCT 30 PUBLISHED WHAT PURPORTS TO E FULL TEXT OF QADHAAFI LETTER TO "USBU" AL-ARABI, WITH A SNIDE ONE-LINE COMMENT IN UPPER CASE: "ADN THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE KNOW WHAT QADHAAFI WANTS." AKHBAR OCT 25 HAD FRONT PAGE ITEM REFUTING AN ALLGED LIBYAN RADIO REPORT THAT MAHMUD ABU WAFIA, A LEADING PEOPLES ASSEMBLY MEMBER AND SADAT'S BROTHER IN LAW, WAS BEING TREATED IN HOSPITAL AFTER BEING SHOT (BY PERSONS UNNAMED). AKHBAR SCORED THIS "FRABICATION", NOTING ABU WAFIA IS IN GOOD HEALTH. THEN, ON OCT 29, AKHBAR PRINTED AN OPEN LETTER FROM ABU WAFIA TO HAIKAL ASKING HIM TO CONFIRM THE 'USBU' AL-ABRABI STORY, I.E. TO SAY WHETHER HAIKAL HAD IN FACT TOLD QADHAAFI THAT NASSER WANTED TO DEDICATE HIS TIME TO ASU AND HOPED QADHAAFI WOULD COME AND "RULE EGYPT".

5. COMMENT: FROM PREVIOUS REPORTING FROMEMBASSY TRIPOLI, WE GATHER ABU WAFIA IS NOT ONE OF LIBYAN RCC'S FAVORITE EGYPTIANS. AN OPEN LETTER ABOUT QADHAAFI FROM HIM IS, THEREFOER, QUITE CLEARLY ANOTHER ARROW SHOT IN DIRECTION OF TRIPOLI.

6. WE WANT TO STRESS HOW COMICAL QADHAAFI'S LETTER SEEMS TO EGYPTIANS. IT WOULD BE HARD TO FIND AN ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISH HERE WHO DREAMS FOR A MOMENT THAT NASSER WANTED TO DEVOTE HIMSELF TO THE ASU OR WHO WOULD HAVE WELCOMED QADHAAFI AS RULTER OF EGYPT.
EILTS

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